

September 16, 2008

OBEY BACKS COMPREHENSIVE ENERGY BILL

Measure Increases Renewable Energy Research, Allows More Drilling

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) voted today to approve a comprehensive energy bill that allows for additional oil exploration, leasing and drilling, strengthened conservation efforts, and most crucially for the long term, greatly expanded research efforts into alternative energy development, including wind, solar, and biofuels.

"This is the first step to correct the mistakes that were made by previous administrations and congresses. For eight years, this Administration has slowly but surely eroded our national security by gutting energy research and increasing our reliance on foreign oil," Obey said. "This bill is not a single magic bullet that will erase our energy problems - it's a comprehensive first step to deal with it from all sides, and in both the long and short term."

Obey noted that the energy package:

- Allows for increased domestic oil production by opening 319 million acres offshore to drilling, and giving the states the option of opening another 85 million acres.
- Expands federal investment into research and development of alternative energy sources, including wind, solar, and biofuels.
- Provides short term relief to help the market deal with supply issues that have resulted from the hurricane season by swapping oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve.
- Ends subsidies to Big Oil companies by eliminating a tax loophole that would provide \$19 billion in corporate welfare to Big Oil; while preserving benefits for small, independent American producers.

- Increases energy relief for low income families by dedicating a portion of new royalties to the Low Income Heating and Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) and Weatherization programs.

"It's important to note that this bill allows the moratorium on offshore leasing to be lifted not unilaterally by a federal bureaucrat in a way that runs roughshod over local people, but in a way that gives the people a voice on what would impact them directly," Obey added, noting that under the bill, impacted states would have a significant say over energy development. "Local people have the right to have a say about what will be done in their neighborhoods - that's what democracy is all about."

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